



U.S. Congressman

Mark Steven Kirk

Proudly serving the people of the 10th District of Illinois

**** U.S. Congressman Mark Steven Kirk, Proudly Serving the People of the 10th District of Illinois ******Website - About Mark - Press Room - Constituent Services - Contact****Featured Video...****Featured Video of the Week**

06/15/09: Congressman Kirk discusses his efforts to fight the rise of "Kush" in the suburbs, a new type of "super-marijuana" that is as expensive as crack cocaine. [Click here to view the video clip.](#)

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Kirk In the News...

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Dear Friends,

In the past you were kind enough to contact me regarding issues relating to animal welfare. Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have been a strong advocate for pets and other animals and believe the federal government needs to play a stronger role in protecting them. I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on the recent pet food recall.

On March 16, the Canada-based Menu Foods recalled pet foods produced at its facilities in Kansas and New Jersey between December 3, 2006, and March 6, 2007. The products are sold by many different distributors under a number of different brand names. The affected products are moist and canned pet foods. The products have been described as "cuts-and-gravy" style pet foods.

The same day, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company announced a recall of its 5.3 ounce Mighty Dog brand pouch products that were produced by Menu Foods. Two weeks later, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company voluntarily recalled all sizes and varieties of its ALPO Prime Cuts in Gravy wet dog food with specific date codes. That day, Hill's Pet Nutrition also recalled its Prescription Diet m/d Feline dry food (this cat food is sold exclusively through veterinarians). The following day, Del Monte Pet Products recalled select product codes of its pet treat products sold under the Jerky Treats, Gravy Train Beef Sticks and Pounce Meaty Morsels brands as well as select dog snack and wet dog food products sold under private label brands.

In total, the FDA received 17,000 reports from American pet owners and farmers who believe the animals under their care were sickened or killed by contaminated food. In the weeks following the initial recall announcement, over 100 types of pet food were recalled. The complete list of recalled foods can be found at the U.S. FDA Web site: www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html.

The pet foods had to be recalled because officials found melamine in the wheat gluten used in the food. Wheat gluten is a filler in wet-style, cuts-and-gravy-type pet food. It is used to thicken pet food "gravy." Melamine is a small, nitrogen-containing molecule that has a number of industrial uses. When injected into gluten, it triggers false readings by tests showing the food has a high protein content. All of the recalled food appears to be from melamine-contaminated gluten imported by one company: Xuzhou Anying Biologic Technology of China.

This week, I will offer legislation banning this Chinese company and any other company found to import contaminated foods into the United States until the Secretary of Health and Human Services certifies to Congress that the company allows regular FDA inspections during manufacturing, meets all FDA safety requirements and is subject to 100 percent FDA sampling upon import. In addition, the FDA is already requiring 100 percent sampling for wheat gluten from China. FDA testified before Congress that it committed over 400 employees to sample pet food collection, monitor recall effectiveness, and prepare consumer complaint reports. Three field laboratories are directly involved in active sample analyses. FDA's Veterinarians and Toxicologists from the Center for Veterinary Medicine and elsewhere in the agency have been researching potential causative agents, analyzing possibilities, evaluating scientific and analytical information, and guiding and supporting the overall efforts. FDA is also working with our

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own Illinois agriculture and health agencies to inform them of the status of the investigative and analytical efforts.

In Congress, the House Energy and Commerce Committee hauled representatives from Menu Foods before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations last month. Following the hearings, Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) introduced the Human and Pet Food Safety Act and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced the Senate companion legislation. This legislation would provide the FDA with mandatory recall power and provide it with the authority to inspect overseas. I support this type of legislation and will work to make it the law of our land.

For up to date information on this recall, the Humane Society established a pet food safety information line providing a list of all companies involved in the recall and ways to determine if your pet's food was affected. The phone number is 1-800-HUMANE-1. You may also access additional information at www.hsus.org/petfoodsafety.

I will continue to closely monitor this situation, as well as other animal welfare issues that come before the Congress. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me or visit my Web site, www.house.gov/kirk.

Very truly yours,

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk
Member of Congress

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